

## CAUT calls on the Alberta government to scrap Bill 18

(Ottawa – April 17, 2024) The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) is calling on the Government of Alberta to protect scientific integrity and academic freedom, and prevent the potential loss of millions of dollars in funding for the province’s university and college researchers by immediately withdrawing or amending Bill 18.

According to public comments made by Premier Danielle Smith, the *Provincial Priorities Act* would give the Alberta government the power to review federal research funds received by university-based researchers to ensure they align with the provincial government’s political priorities.

“Applying a political litmus test to research funding is an unprecedented attack on scientific independence, research integrity and academic freedom,” said CAUT executive director David Robinson. “Bill 18 opens the door to political censorship that has no place in a democratic society such as ours.”

Robinson said the bill would “violate widely accepted principles of academic freedom that grant university and college academics the freedom to carry out teaching and research without censorship or political interference.”

The Supreme Court of Canada has recognized that academic freedom is necessary to allow a “free and fearless search for knowledge and the propagation of ideas” that is “essential to our continuance as a lively democracy.”

“Albertans and all Canadians are best served by university and college research that is assessed on its scientific merit, and not on political ideology,” added Robinson.

Robinson said CAUT is working with its member academic staff associations in the province to explore potential legal challenges should Bill 18 become law. In the meantime, Robinson noted that all university and college leaders in the province have a positive obligation to protect and promote academic freedom and should be joining calls for the Alberta government to withdraw or amend Bill 18.

CAUT is the national voice of more than 72,000 academic and professional staff at over 125 universities and colleges across Canada.

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